

## Belmont School District

Elementary Schools: Butler (342 students), Burbank (351), Winn Brook (465), Wellington (605)

Chenery Middle School (1763)

High School (1237)

This district has progressed from recycling only paper in classrooms to recycling in the lunchrooms, filling a 10 cy cardboard container weekly, presenting recycling assemblies, winning green awards and most of all changing the culture in the schools by way of the PTA/PTO's.

I am extremely proud of this district's effort of following the four R's: refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle to become more sustainable in the last two years. This growth was a combined effort of students, parents and staff from school and town departments working collaboratively to carry out these green initiatives.

Highlighted accomplishments:

### 2012-2013 School Year

- All classrooms and offices were checked ensuring a recycle bin for paper was present and any teacher requesting received a recycling bin for plastic.
- A 10 cubic yard cardboard container was placed next to the trash dumpster behind the high school to increase cardboard recycling. (The custodians more apt to recycle flattened cardboard instead of cutting it to fit into 65-gallon wheeled carts.)
- Recycling launched in the four elementary school cafeterias. This included the kitchen staff recycling all commercial size food containers and pizza boxes.
- The four elementary schools were invited to take part in the Trex Plastic Bag Challenge to help educate parents about the problems plastic film causes when placed in curbside recycling. Burbank School won a bench.
- Milk carton recycling started at the four elementary schools. The elementary trash/recycling consists of: 5-gallon pail with sieve for liquid pour-off, 18-gallon recycling bin for milk and juice cartons, water bottles and clear clamshells, and 1-2 trash barrels. The two larger schools have two

of these set-ups instead of one. I spent a week at each school implementing the changes and recording data using the Carton Council's toolkit to help record the progress. PowerPoint presentation attached detailing the improvement.

## 2013-2014 School Year

- Cafeteria recycling was implemented at the Chenery Middle School. The set-up was slightly different. The pour-off bucket was placed on a milk crate (taller students), a plastic lined 65-gallon wheeled cart was used instead of a recycling bin and two trash barrels. Unfortunately there is only room for two stations (chaotic when 300+ students are dismissed). Kitchen staff was already recycling containers and pizza boxes.
- Two high school students, a 7<sup>th</sup> teacher and a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher took part in a national program, Earthwatch that culminated in a community action plan.

[http://earthwatch.org/?utm\\_campaign=extras&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=myemma](http://earthwatch.org/?utm_campaign=extras&utm_medium=email&utm_source=myemma)

The plan started with a t-shirt design contest for high school students with the winning entry made into t-shirts for winners of the approaching 7<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cafeteria recycling contests. The seventh grade teacher held a poster contest for all seventh graders to highlight the importance of recycling and I conducted a weeklong cafeteria recycling contest for 7<sup>th</sup> grade which consisted of three teams. The winning team received a t-shirt and the three winners of the poster contest helped with the cafeteria recycling contest for the third graders at Butler School. Photos and data for this community action plan are attached.

- Wellington School went above and beyond implementing green measures and became a model for the other schools. An all school assembly that incorporated art from recycled materials, a recycling presentation, and a kick off to the Green Cup Energy Challenge (national contest that conserves

energy use) was well received by the students. Their PTO Green Team applied as a DEP Green Team and requested 5-gallon recycling bins for each classroom to recycle plastic and established a line item for green initiatives in their PTO budget. Wellington earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Green Cup Energy Challenge, was recognized by MA DEP as a Green Team grand prizewinner and took second honors in the Secretary's Awards for Excellence in Energy & Environmental Education. End of the year locker clean out provided supplies for the summer enrichment program.

- Three of the elementary schools continued the Trex contest this time awarding Butler a bench. Each school participating received a birdhouse to place in their gardens.
- All four elementary schools started work on restoring their school gardens and the high school started a vegetable garden to provide food for their cafeteria and local food pantry.
- Each elementary and middle school formed a green committee that was part of their PTA/PTO. It soon became apparent that it would be beneficial if these green committees from the different schools met and shared their successes and obstacles. One parent came forward and became the chair of this newly formed group, Belmont PTA/PTO Green Alliance that meets once a month and has representatives from the four elementary, middle and high schools.

#### 2014-2015 School Year

- The Green Alliance established every other monthly meeting to meet with the School Superintendent. This was helpful in getting green initiatives implemented system-wide giving parity among the schools.
- All four elementary schools and the middle school registered to the DEP Green Team program.
- All four elementary schools and middle school take part in the Safe Routes to School Program.

- A six-week Tray-less Thursday piloted in all the elementary schools. There were many challenges, but important data was collected: best menus to serve, adults needed at the trash/recycling stations and cataloging food waste.
- The food service director implemented Meatless Mondays and incorporated local produce from the high school garden and local farm, Belmont Acres.
- All four elementary schools are competing in the Green Cup Energy Challenge spotlighting Belmont's new Green Communities status.
- The district won a Carton Council Grant to buy an electric power washer for each school to wash their wheeled carts. (Addressing custodians' complaints of odors, especially in the warm weather.)
- I submit a monthly column, Green Corner, to each school's newsletter informing parents about green initiatives in the schools and how to replicate them at home.
- Belmont PTA/PTO Green Alliance will host the movie FED UP for the whole community.